

FOUR MILLENIA OF
INDIAN SCULPTURE
COMING TO STATES

Masterpieces of ancient Indian stone and terra-cotta sculpture are currently being assembled for a travelling exhibition which will arrive in this country early in May.

Approximately 20 tons of sculpture from a score of museums and institutions in India will be brought by ships of the United States Navy to San Francisco, where they are to be exhibited through July 5 at the M. H. de Young Memorial Museum in Golden Gate Park. They will proceed to Seattle, Cleveland and New York and then re-embark for the Orient with a stop en route at Honolulu.

The traditions of Indian sculpture are firmly rooted in the expression of divinity through the human form. Even the early works in this exhibition serve as evidence of this essential reference. Among them is the red sandstone Yakshi, standing on a crouching dwarf. It is from the Kushan Dynasty (3rd century A.D.). The Gupta period (5th century A.D.) is represented by a standing Buddha of red sandstone in high relief with a carved halo. A Yakshi with a mirror and two attendants standing under a mango tree is from the Chandella dynasty, was executed in the 11th century and is an example of one of the more recent periods represented in the collection.

The collection has already been seen in Tokyo. It includes 97 pieces, ranging from the early empire period (about 2500 B.C.) to works executed as late as the 15th century. The exhibition is unique in that only fragmentary glimpses of the culture it represents are (or have been) seen in the United States. The catalogue introduction by Dr. Sherman E. Lee, Director of The Cleveland Museum of Art, characterizes the collection as redolent of "the flowing organic forms . . . the distinctive quality of classic Indian sculpture, its rasa or flavor." He concludes his introduction by pointing out the theological models for art, and suggests that "A varied and systematic vocabulary of metaphors was

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ready at hand for the artist, and he used them in preference to observation. If the sculptured figure could live, why not as a superior being, the product of man's longings, metaphorically expressed? Pygmalion's Galatea may have moved because of the matchless accuracy, logic and beauty of her body. The Indian sculptor's celestial being moves because she is a beautiful metaphor imbued with prana -- the breath of life."

The 97 works of art were selected by the Cleveland and de Young museums from the Tokyo exhibition which was recently organized by the Government of India, and included more than 200 pieces. The Indian Government was represented in negotiations for the U.S. exhibit by Humayun Kabir, Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs and by Dr. Grace Morley, former director of the San Francisco Museum of Art. Dr. Morley is presently director of the National Museum of India at New Delhi.